

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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Conyers and Other Ranking Members Call for the Release of Iraqi Prisoner Abuse Documents

**“The President can either choose to cooperate with us or continue to ignore the
American people and their elected representatives”**

Congressman John Conyers, Jr. issued the following statement at a press conference today to request documents relating to the Iraqi prisoner abuse issues from the Bush Administration:

“The manner and extent to which the Iraq prison abuse scandal is investigated represents nothing less than a test of the functioning of our constitutional form of government and its system of checks and balances.

On the one hand, we have what is clearly one of the most serious charges of human rights abuses in our nation’s history. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo, it now appears that our nation’s military engaged in physical, psychological, and sexual abuse on a widespread basis. Scores of detainees were murdered. Numerous warnings were ignored. The vast majority of the detainees appear to have been imprisoned without cause. There is credible evidence that the scandal can be traced to decisions by the highest levels of the Administration, up to and including Secretary Rumsfeld and the President.

On the other hand, we have the misfortune of living under a Republican Administration and Congress that act as if oversight was a dirty word. Our executive branch has spent most of its time and effort developing novel legal theories to circumvent the Geneva Convention. The reviews initiated by the Army are little more than a fig leaf.

Congress has been nothing less than derelict in its oversight responsibilities. They have rejected and rebuffed each and every one of our attempts to review these serious charges on a bipartisan basis. At the same time, House Republicans have challenged the patriotism of anyone who dares to question these embarrassing abuses.

We Democrats are left with no choice but to conduct our own investigation. Our document request gives the Administration one last chance to allow a meaningful outside investigation. The President can either choose to cooperate with us or continue to ignore the American people and their elected representatives.”

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